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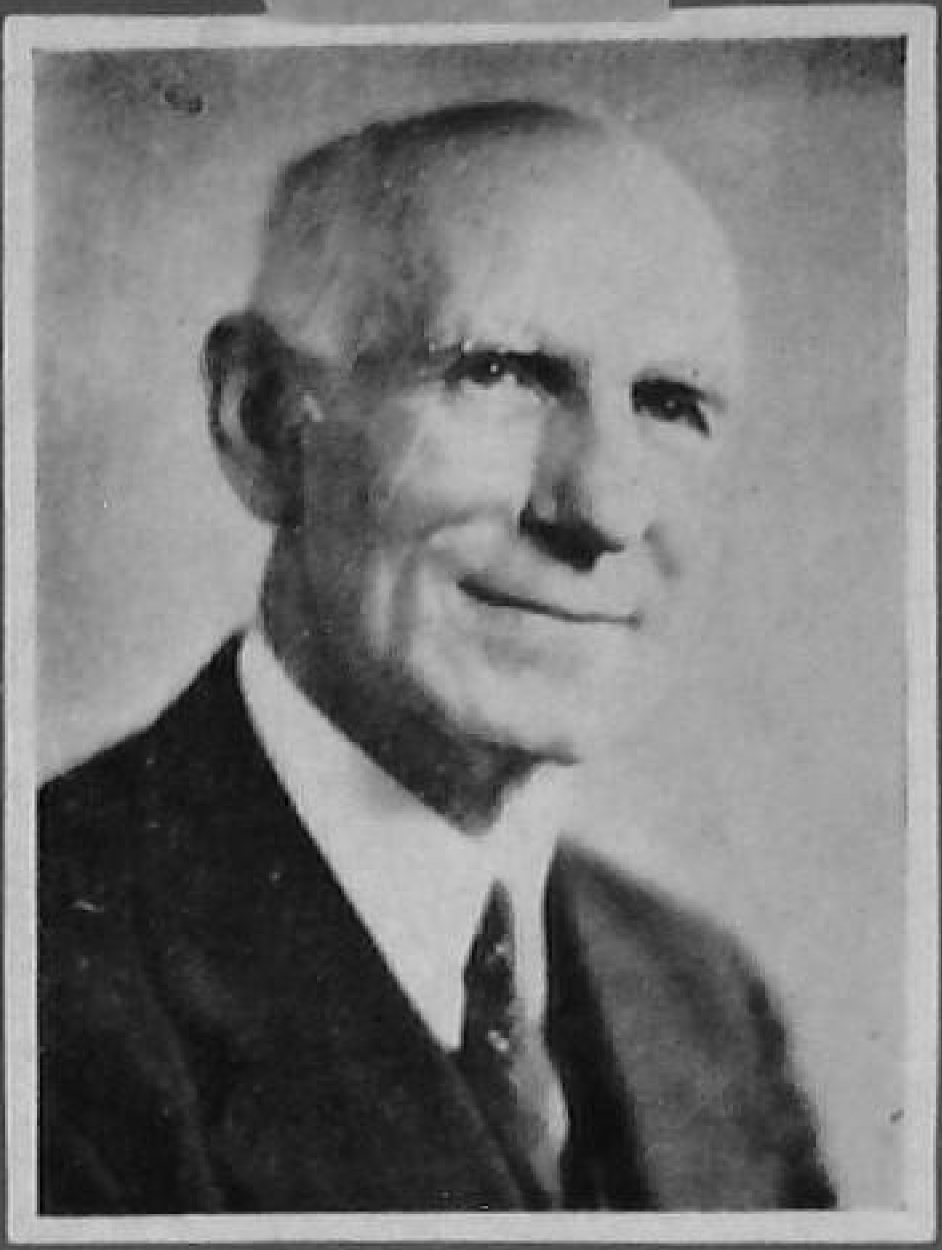

Nothing can stop it now

FRANK LAUBACH

LAU

AND WORLD LITERACY BY

GORDON HEWITT

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Nothing Can Stop It Now

FRANK C. LAUBACH

and

WORLD LITERACY

by

GORDON HEWITT

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NOTHING CAN STOP IT NOW

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FRANK LAUBACH
and
WORLD LITERACY

THIS is the story of one man's vision and how he has sought to work it out in the workaday world.

It is one of the great "success stories" of our generation—of success not measured in wealth or power but in lives of humble men and women freed of a great burden.

It is the story of a pioneer enterprise in social reform and missionary strategy which deserves comparison with the achievement of Wilberforce and Carey.

It is a story which challenges the Christian conscience of the West and which demands urgent and concerted action.

It is an unfinished story of which the most significant chapters remain to be written.

THE VISION ON SIGNAL HILL

One evening in 1929 Frank Laubach was sitting on a hill above his cottage at Dansalan, in the Lanao province of the Philippine Islands, oppressed with a sense of failure and futility. Many years before, as a boy of seventeen, he had become interested through missionary friends in the warlike Moros of the province. These Moros (Filipino Moslems), in number about half a million, had been fighting Europeans ever since Magellan discovered the Philippines, and were reputed to be the worst trouble-makers American soldiers had ever faced.

When Laubach and his wife came to work among them in 1915 the American military authorities politely warned them off; missionaries would only aggravate a tense political situation. But now, leaving his wife and son near Manila, he had been allowed to return alone to Lanao. He was by this time an experienced missionary, well known throughout the Philippines as an advocate of better educational and health services, as an able recruiting-sergeant for tough missionary enterprises, and as a practical mystic who got things done. But here on Signal Hill he was a lonely and defeated man. He believed God had called him to serve the Moros, but in the first month he had made no headway with them. This evening, on the hill overlooking "the province that had him beaten" it seemed that God spoke to him, through his brokenness and defeat, uncovering a secret sense of racial superiority and lack of love. Years afterwards he wrote of his experience: "In that terrible wonderful hour on Signal Hill I became colour-blind. Ever since, I have been partial to tan, the more tan the better! Every missionary goes through some such experience as that—or comes home defeated."

Laubach went down from the hill and told some *panditas* (Moslem priests) that he wished to study their Koran, and the next day his cottage was filled with swarthy eloquent Moros intent on making a Moslem out of him. The steps by which this new approach led to Laubach's first campaign for adult literacy can be briefly told. He was eager now to learn the *Maranaw* dialect of the province and he engaged as teacher a man named Pambaya, an "honest Moro who once was convicted of murder, sentenced to twenty years and then acquitted." With a fellow-missionary, a Filipino named Donato Galia, he struggled with a language not a page of which had ever been printed. Almost by accident he stumbled upon the "key" which was to unlock the door of adult literacy in Lanao, and which was to lead to the search for similar "keys" in other languages all over the world. He noted that there were only sixteen consonants

in the Maranaw dialect and that three words, each with four syllables, had all these consonants. " These three words are as familiar to them as 'mother', 'hand', and 'work' are to us. They are *Malabanga*, name of a town in Lanao; *Karatasa*, paper; *Paganada*, study or learn. We cut up the words like this:

ma	la	ba	nga
ka	ra	ta	sa
pa	ga	na	da

Then we begin with *ma ma*, which means man; *a ma* which means father; *ma la*, which means big, and so on. The combination of these consonants with the other vowels in the language is a simple additional step. Learning to read from the chart is so easy that the most stupid person can do it. And they love it so much they hardly give us time to eat . . ." So Laubach wrote in 1931 when the campaign for adult literacy was well under way. By that time there was a school building, a "saloon" converted into a church, a printing press (complete with printer) offered by a missionary friend in another part of the island, and a bi-weekly paper, *Lanao Progress*, printed at first with Arabic script on one side and Roman lettering on the other. This was a compromise to satisfy the consciences of the Moslem *imams* who regarded Roman type with suspicion as the property of the Roman Catholic Church. The first Maranaw Reading Chart had been devised (see below).

FIRST MARANAW READING CHART

LESSON I.

a	ma	la	ba	nga
i	mi	li	bi	ngi
o	mo	lo	bo	ngo
u	mu	lu	bu	ngu

ma ma man	**a ma** father	**la la** to pat	**a la** God	**ma la** large	**la ma** yard
mi mi girl	**a mi** our	**li li** name	**a li** name	**li ma** hand	**li o** outside
mo mo chewed	**a mo** monkey	**lo lo** dull	**a lo** hello	**ma lo** pretty	**o lo** head
ba ba short	**ba ba i** woman	**la ba** profit	**ba la** pair	**ba li** a receipt	**ba lo** clang
bi bi duck	**bi ba i** push	**la bi** more	**i bi** itch	**o bi** a vegetable	**lo bi** cocoanut
bo bo to pour	**ba bo** aunt	**la bo** prefer	**bo la** ball	**bu la** wide	**bu l** smoke
nga nga open mouth	**ba nga** island	**bo nga** fruit	**lu nga** plural	**ma nga** a fly	**o nga** fruit
ngi ngi corner of mouth	**la ngi** wait	**li ngi** to turn	**lu ngi** allow	**lu ma** smooth	**lu mi** make flat

New readers were increasing at an almost miraculous rate. Another extract from the letter quoted above gives some indication of the pressure under which Laubach and his colleagues were working:—

> Mr. Galia says that he taught nine Moros to read in a half-hour. That is better than any record that I have thus far made with a large group. A half-dozen Moros interrupted this letter. They came in and said they could not wait until tomorrow but had to be taught right away ! They had only an hour to spare and wanted all the education they could get in that time. So I have stopped this letter to teach them. While I concentrated on one of them, the rest listened. They have just left the house. I do not expect you to believe me, but here is the fact: this man had finished reading three pages of our newspaper, and could read everything I put before him with fair speed. One hour ! Every time that happens I feel as though a miracle had happened. It is possible only because these people are hungry mentally and spiritually.

Such enthusiasm to learn was not exceptional. It gripped the whole province of Lanao. Laubach tells how on one

occasion at six-thirty in the morning a group of twenty Moros presented themselves at his cottage door demanding an examination. They had come twenty miles by launch to show their prowess. On another occasion an outlaw, whose skill in a first half-hour lesson encouraged Laubach to invite him to be a voluntary teacher, expressed his enthusiasm in somewhat unusual terms. " You taught me to read and you are the best friend I have in the world. I want to do something for you. Is there anybody in Lanao you want me to put out of the way ? "

Outlaws and sultans, " holy men " and chieftains, showed a like enthusiasm as learners and teachers. Already in this first campaign Laubach was beginning to develop the system of voluntary teaching by the newly literate which has become characteristic of his work in India and elsewhere.

It was a financial crisis in the Lanao campaign which provided a slogan for the whole Adult Literacy Movement. In 1931 the American slump was beginning to take effect on missionary funds. One terrible afternoon Laubach had to call together his paid teachers and tell them that he could pay them no longer. A sultan named Kakai Dagalangit when he heard of this spoke prophetic words: " This campaign shall not stop for lack of money. It is Lanao's only hope—if it stops, we are lost. *Everybody who learns has got to teach.* If he doesn't, I'll kill him." " So," comments Laubach, " this big, fierce, brilliant-eyed chieftain of all southern Lanao invented the method of ' each one teach one ' which has since gone round the world ! "

FURTHER AFIELD

The transformation of the Moros in Lanao by the literacy campaigns was so remarkable that missionary agencies in other parts of the Philippines began to see in it the promise of a spiritual break-through which older evangelistic methods were failing to achieve. In the autumn of 1931

Laubach went to Manila at the invitation of the secretary of the National Christian Council to prepare lessons in several dialects of the Northern Philippines. Within a few weeks charts were completed in nine languages. Laubach wrote to his father: " It is proving easier than we have feared to find the key words for each of these languages. We have trained a hundred and fifty young people to teach and have given them certificates . . . we are taking steps to teach illiterates in the leper colony on Culion Island. This will bring the Bible, and thus comfort and enrichment of life, to those pitiful unfortunates—there are six thousand of them—who are least able to care for themselves." By the end of a second campaign in the North Philippines in 1932, key-word lessons had been prepared in twenty-one languages and dialects. " Lightning Literacy " was becoming something more than a local phenomenon, confined to a single language group, for some of these Northern dialects were strangely dissimilar from *Maranaw*. To Laubach and those who worked with him it began to look as though he had discovered something—a technique and a spirit—which might transform the situation in the Eastern world, laying it open to the Christian Gospel in a new way, and promising liberation and enrichment of life to millions of down-trodden men and women. Letters were beginning to come in from India, Egypt, Palestine and other countries pleading for guidance in adult literacy work. One Indian missionary made the point that a strong indigenous church was impossible until more of its members could read the Scriptures. Laubach himself was already deeply concerned with the social and economic implications of illiteracy in the Eastern world. For him, the preaching of the Gospel of Christ and the betterment of social conditions were not different tasks to be pursued separately. Lanao had already provided ample proof that adult literacy was a uniquely fruitful way of pursuing both tasks together. Was this a local accident or was it something which God was calling him to attempt in a wider field ?

On January 20, 1935, he set out from Lanao to put the matter to the test. His furlough was due but he had accepted invitations to visit Singapore, Ceylon, parts of India, Cairo, Palestine, Syria and Turkey on the way. As he had no resources except his furlough travel allowance, he left Mrs. Laubach and their son Bob at Lanao, and they were to meet him two months later at Colombo after his visit to India. He was half frightened at his own audacity, but the die was cast. As his ship left the Philippine port of Iligan, his Moro friends made a great demonstration and their highest *imam* prayed that " his American friend, whom they had helped to make the easiest lessons in the world, should have the blessing of Allah as he went round the world introducing their method to less fortunate nations." The Moros had no doubts that this was an end and a new beginning. They were proudly making a present of their own leader to the needy residue of the human race.

PASSAGE TO INDIA

Whatever doubts and misgivings Laubach had as he sailed for India, he was strengthened by the deep conviction that God's hand was upon this thing. It was not an irrational conviction. Quite apart from his success in the Philippines, evidence was coming in from other parts of the world that the old slow ways of teaching adults to read could now be discarded. He had before him the example of Russia where something like a hundred million illiterates had been taught to read and write in the fifteen years following the Revolution. Dr. James Yen in China had been demonstrating that a nation-wide campaign for adult literacy could be wonderfully successful without the restraints and compulsions of a totalitarian State. Both these large-scale movements had used methods basically similar to those Laubach had worked out for himself in the Philippines—the rationalizing and simplifying of alphabets, the use of charts, of publicity adapted to local conditions ; above all,

the use of the enthusiasm engendered among the newly literate to demonstrate their skill in teaching others. What had happened in Russia and China and Lanao, could happen in India, anywhere. How much better if it could happen in willing obedience to Christ and as a gift of His Church to the world!

India was not going to be easy all the same. The first few weeks were enough to show that the misgivings of some of Laubach's friends had good foundation. First, there was the obtuseness of the main languages. They did not yield readily to the "key-word" method. On the sea passage from Singapore to Bombay, Laubach and two companions "laboured and wrestled" every day to find key words in Hindi; but Hindi had fifty letters to Lanao's sixteen and though a first set of lessons was complete by the end of the voyage it proved most disappointing in use. It was much the same later with Tamil and Telugu, and the first Marathi lessons were not even printed for want of a sponsor. Another difficulty was the difference between the ancient literary languages and the spoken colloquial dialects. "If we used the written but unspoken words, the illiterate could not understand them. If we used the spoken but unwritten words, the pundit would not tolerate them." Laubach was able later to see the early mistakes of this campaign as a "fortunate misfortune" because it led to the development of "picture-word-syllable" charts that proved most successful (see p. 17), but it must have been a hard blow at the time.

There was a further difficulty. Success in Lanao had depended on spontaneous enthusiasm to learn. But in India he found hunger and hopelessness such as he had never known before. An interview with Gandhi on this first visit was not encouraging. "I doubt whether India ought to become literate," he said. The literature of the West was not fit for India to read. Great benefactors, like Mahomet, had been illiterate and their work was not hindered. Above all, India was desperately poor and food was more

important to her than books. Later, as is well known, Gandhi reversed this verdict and urged that literacy should be required for the franchise. Laubach and the Christian literacy campaigns initiated by him may reasonably claim much of the credit for his changed attitude. But in 1935 Gandhi's lack of interest in and support for literacy was another setback to one who, like Laubach, shared so many of his enthusiasms.

It was just as well perhaps that his first Indian tour was a short one. In Cairo he received a tremendous welcome. Forty missionaries and nationals were already waiting to prepare lessons; working in shifts for hours at a time they set about it " with such wit and skill and joy that people couldn't wait for their shifts—they did not want to miss the fun." Next it was the turn of Jerusalem, where Laubach had his first (but by no means last) battle with a fastidious scholar " who would have classical words or none, no matter whether illiterates learned to read or not." Then, by way of Beirut and Istanbul, to delayed furlough in America. It could hardly be termed a holiday, for Laubach was now a man with a single flaming passion. He stumped the country pleading help for the world's illiterates—the " silent billion " who had no voice in any of the councils of the world. Already the message was framing in his mind which he put in a letter two years later to the delegates at the great missionary conference at Tambaram:

> In Asia and Africa, over a billion people are illiterate, over half the human race, nine persons out of every ten. This cold paper cannot tell you what that means. You think it is a pity they cannot read, but the real tragedy is that they cannot speak; they are the silent victims, the forgotten men, driven like animals, mutely submitting in every age before and since the pyramids were built.
>
> Our gospel declares: " The spirit of the Lord is upon me . . . to set at liberty them that are bruised." The most bruised people on this planet, the naked, hungry, the fallen among thieves, the sick in fear, the imprisoned in mind, are these illiterates. That is not exaggeration. It is exact truth.

Take India, for illustration . . . Illiterates never get surplus flesh; the money lenders see to that. In one form or another this is the black sorrow of nearly every illiterate in the world. They do not know enough to live without some leader to whom they are enslaved for life—more than half the human race are slaves yet, hungry, driven, diseased, afraid of this world, and of the demons in the next. This is the exact truth. They can be set free.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Before the end of his 1935-36 furlough a group of friends formed the World Literacy Committee (now incorporated in the Committee on World Literacy and Christian Literature of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America.) At once this committee began to make funds available for further travelling in the interests of literacy. It must have been a great comfort to Laubach to be regarded no longer as a missionary tied to the Lanao station, a missionary with an odd and expensive hobby which his stipend could not support. From now on, like Wesley, the world was to be his parish. From now on, in the words of Alfred D. Moore, the present secretary of the committee, " Laubach is the teacher, the teacher of teachers, and the embattled and compassionate friend of humble, unlettered folk all over the world." Lanao was, and is, his first love and seldom a year passes without a visit to his beloved Moros, but his keen mind, his generous enthusiasms and his unique technical experience are at the service of literary enterprises wherever they are undertaken. For the last seven years he has had official status as Special Counsellor and Representative of the Committee on World Literacy and Christian Literature, but he is not a man to bother about status and titles except as they further the work to which God has set his hand.

The rest of the story can be compressed into small compass, for it follows the pattern of all that has gone before. In the autumn of 1936 he was back again in India and in the next few months of hurried journeys, working under tremendous pressure, he laid the foundations for literacy campaigns which have transformed the missionary situation in many areas and have pointed the way, beyond the confusion of tongues, to a fully literate India. The campaigns were not equally successful; the follow-up has in some cases fallen short of the hope engendered by Laubach's own enthusiasm. But their impact was at least sufficient to make a decisive difference to the literacy figures given for India in 1931 and 1941. Over forty million adults had learned to read and write, and literacy had at last caught up with the rapid growth of population. What is more significant is that the new methods continue to bring in a steady stream of new readers long after the initial campaigns are finished. The initiative is passing, as it should, from missionary committees to State and provincial education departments. In 1937, shortly before he left for Africa, Laubach received this letter from Pundit Nehru:

Anand Bhawan, Allahabad.

I am greatly interested in the literacy movement which is gathering momentum in India. With your wide experience in the liquidation of illiteracy, this movement should derive great profit by your co-operation. I hope that the provincial governments in India, who are pushing this literacy campaign, will take full advantage of your expert knowledge and experience and will seek your co-operation. I am glad to learn that the World Literacy Committee of New York is interesting itself in the work in India. Any help that they may give in this work will be very welcome and will bear fruitful results.

Yours sincerely,

Jawaharlal Nehru.

As he sailed from Mombasa he wrote: "Within five years a tremendous campaign against illiteracy will grip India." And it did!

A START IN AFRICA

Next it was Africa's turn. African languages presented fewer difficulties than Indian as the alphabets are simpler and more phonetic, and the lack of archaic written languages was a positive advantage. On the other hand, hundreds of African languages and dialects shade into one another, and some are spoken by only a few thousand people. Were written languages necessary in each case ? This was a problem Laubach had to leave to missionary scholars on the spot. Some of them now begin to regret that for the earliest charts they did not take the law into their own hands and teach illiterates in the strongest dialect of a language family. Swahili lessons proved the easiest. " Picture-word-syllable " charts won immediate enthusiasm and brought quick results.

After a fifty-day tour of East Africa Laubach left, full of confidence for the charts but unhappy about the organization of campaigns and leaders. He hoped to return in 1940, but the war has postponed his visit by seven years. Meanwhile over forty mission stations have built up lessons similar to those developed in the brief visit of 1937, in some cases with excellent results. A native official told him: " I have watched you day by day teaching my countrymen, and I am convinced that this is the greatest hope that has come to Africa since Livingstone."

LATIN AMERICA

At the time of Pearl Harbour, Laubach was on furlough in the United States, and the war held him in the Western hemisphere, but literacy campaigns in Latin America were as desperately needed as anywhere in the Orient and he was soon at work adapting and perfecting methods, spreading that infectious enthusiasm which is his peculiar gift. In the war years, nine Latin-American governments officially adopted his methods. In Peru alone, on a return visit, he found 14,000 paid teachers as well as thousands of " each one teach one " volunteers using his " picture-syllable " lessons. In Haiti, 70,000 adults were taught to read simple English.

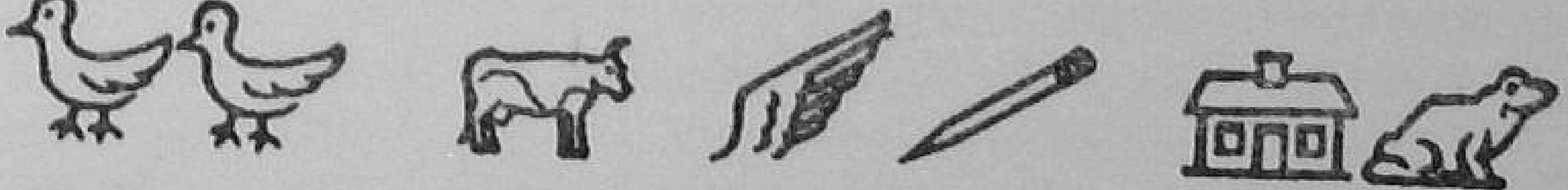
PICTURE-WORD-SYLLABLE CHART

Here is a fragment of a chart used among Latin-American illiterates to teach reading in Spanish:—

In the left-hand column there is a series of pictures of familiar objects. The teacher points to the first picture and asks " What is that ?" The pupil answers *Ala* (wing). The teacher then tells him it starts with the letter " a " and points to it in the right-hand column. Next he asks, " What is the first sound of the word *mano*(hand)?" The pupil replies " ma " and the teacher points to it in the right-hand column. Thus the pupil quickly learns to identify the written form of these syllables with the pictures.

a la	a
ma no	ma
sa po	sa
lá piz	la
pa to	pa
va ca	va
ca sa	ca

After a few minutes he is starting to read aloud simple sentences made up of the syllables he has learned, still identifying each by the picture. He readily associates the pictures, the printed syllables and the proper sounds. He reads aloud *Papa va a la casa* (papa goes to the house).



pa pa va a la ca sa

Soon he can read syllables without the pictures. He has gained confidence. Reading is easy !

In recent years Laubach has increasingly concerned himself with the problem of the English language. He finds it hard to be polite about English spelling. Often he does not try. Once he asked an interviewer how he would pronounce g-h-o-t-i. The interviewer suggested numerous possibilities, after which Laubach said: "Good, but you have left one out. It could be pronounced 'fish.'"[1] On the other hand he has never doubted the potential value of English as a world language and while pleading incessantly for a rationalized phonetic spelling, he has been working on English "second readers" which use a simplified vocabulary, with phonetic spelling sometimes printed above the present spelling.

Now Laubach is on his travels again. His itinerary for 1947-48 includes campaigns and follow-up work in Egypt, Syria, Persia, East and West Africa, Belgian Congo and the Philippines. Mostly he has to travel by 'plane nowadays, which is not as good for preparatory work as a sea passage. But his energy and boyish enthusiasm are not a whit abated by his sixty-three years. "The Arabic lessons when printed are going to be *beautiful*. I do not know what I would have done without the wonderful assistance from everyone on all sides . . . Jane is drawing pictures for more lessons on the plane. We all leave Cairo with regret"—that is a typical extract from one of his recent despatches home.

"Miracle Man of the Moros", "The Apostle with the Flaming Heart"—they have called Frank Laubach by these names. Although some among us are inclined to fight shy of such epithets, it is at least worth considering whether they do not sum up quite aptly the life-offering of a man who went out in obedience to a vision, not knowing whither he went; of one who profoundly believes that God has answered his obedience with miracles from the first days among the Moros until now.

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[1] For example, if "gh" is pronounced as in "tough", "o" as in "women" "ti" as in "nation."

Undoubtedly the rapid growth of adult literacy has placed an immense burden on the Christian Church. If new literates are not fed with literature suitable to each stage of their progress a relapse into illiteracy is inevitable, and it is very difficult to stir their interest again. Many have been eager to learn for the satisfaction of an immediate need—to get out of the grip of a money-lender, to get a better job, to write letters home while on war-service. Unless they are led forward into an *enjoyment* of this new talent their interest declines as soon as the immediate objective is won. More serious than either of these considerations is the fact that the new literate will read anything he can get hold of. For instance, in countries where the ancient pattern of tribal society has broken down, the literate is more at the mercy of the baser forms of Western culture than his illiterate brother. A government enquiry into the causes of the riots in the Rhodesian Copper Belt before the war singled out perverse literature as the chief cause. Literacy is a gateway to evil as well as good. Unless the flow of Christian literature is increased to keep pace with it, the outlook for the next few decades is disturbing to say the least.

To some Christians the prospect is so alarming that they would call a halt in literacy campaigns until the supply of Christian literature shows more promise of meeting the rapidly increasing demand. Whatever sympathy one may have with this point of view, the time has clearly passed when a check on literacy could be considered as a practical solution. The initiative in almost every area is passing from missionaries to government officials, from churches to education authorities. The tide of literacy cannot be stemmed.

A more realistic approach is demanded in which the teaching of literacy and the supply of literature are seen as interdependent tasks which must be undertaken together.

" Lightning Literacy " has certainly created a grave problem —so did the emancipation of slaves. It is the kind of problem which can only be met by positive effort and wise planning so that the potential good becomes actual, and a whole new area of human experience is claimed for the Lordship of Christ.

In fairness to the subject of this pamphlet, it must be set on record that Frank Laubach has faced this problem from the first. It has never been far from the front of his mind since the day, early in the Moro campaigns, when new readers came to him saying they had finished reading the last issue of *Lanao Progress* and asking for something else to read. His letter to the delegates at Tambaram in 1938 contained a long postscript which stated the urgency of the problem as cogently as it has ever been stated :—

> As millions become literate there looms up the staggering task of providing them with enough good literature. These literacy campaigns are going to double the world's readers ! . . . The tide will be rising—before we are ready. A billion people, over half the human race, will be surging in upon us like a tidal wave before we are ready. Are *we* going to give them that reading, or who ? Will it be clean or not ? Will they be flooded with the message of Christ or with atheism ? Will they read love or hate ? Whatsoever is sown in their minds, the world will reap. What will happen when this dumb two-thirds shall speak after the silence of the centuries ?

Addressing the annual meeting of the American Bible Society in 1946 he said:—

> Every time I pass a railroad news stand and see the books sold there, I shudder to think of the possibilities for evil in literacy. It is good only if people read good things. It is bad if they read bad things. *But you can't stop literacy now.* You can ride in on the tremendous wave of enthusiasm for literacy all over the world. You can give people a taste for the Bible if you use this material (i.e., his *Story of Jesus*) for a textbook. You can turn millions to Christ and to the Bible if you use this as God's open door to the three-fifths of the world who are illiterate and the other fifth who ardently desire to learn English.

As his 'plane from Beirut to Teheran in March 1947 passed over the once fertile Euphrates valley his anger blazed out at the destructive use of power by the Western nations. " We have the most broken homes and the most rotten literature in our history," he wrote, " Our badness is an *ugly* sin, not the sin of weakness, but the sin of callous power, which Jesus hated."

Laubach has been increasingly concerned in recent campaigns with second and third stage reading for new literates. No one could justly accuse him of being indifferent to the dangers of a one-sided devotion to literacy at the expense of a carefully thought out programme for providing good literature. In this, as in other ways, his work stands as a challenge to the churches.

No single man, however wise and devoted, no one organization, however widespread and well supported its operations, is sufficient for this task of providing literature for the new literates. The resources of the specialist Christian Literature Societies are woefully inadequate for the demands now made upon them. In the words of one well qualified to speak:

> With more people reading than ever before . . . . the Church dare no longer be content to let who will devote what time and talent they can to the powerful printed page . . . The day has unmistakably come for bold new ventures, and for literature to be recognized as a part, second to none in importance, of the entire Church programme. (Ruth Ure, *The Highway of Print*, p. 17.)

E.16

THE TRAVELLING BOOKMAN

JOHN MURDOCH OF MADRAS

---

by A. W. McClymont

"India is what she is largely through her ancient literature. It is largely through literature that she must be won for Christ."

It was this conviction that inspired John Murdoch during fifty years of service in India: that led him almost single-handed to set up and maintain at Madras a Christian publishing centre which was unique in this field of missionary enterprise.

Mass-literacy movements in India today find the ground well prepared by Murdoch and his successors, and have at their disposal machinery for publication and distribution which is largely the result of Murdoch's vision and enterprise.

Dr. J. Z. Hodge has contributed a closing chapter on the literature work of the National Christian Council for India which links Dr. McClymont's account of Murdoch's pioneer work with contemporary programmes and policies.

266

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